



## Mitigation called for, not rejection

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The waste transfer station proposal scheduled to go before the Pomona Planning Commission today has engendered a spirited opposition from many in the city.

The organization One LA has led an aggressive response against the proposal by Valley Vista Services, joined by residents and many businesses in the the southeast Pomona area where the project would be located.

We do not agree with them that the project should be rejected outright by the Planning Commission. The station has a number of high-profile backers in town and some considerable merits, not least the jobs and revenue it would bring to the hard-pressed city. That's why college presidents Michael Ortiz of Cal Poly Pomona and Philip Pumerantz of Western University of Health Sciences and others support the plan.

At the same time, opponents have raised some legitimate points about potential air pollution and traffic from the project, and concerns that there could be ineffective enforcement of whatever the project owners might agree to in terms of mitigation.

Those are issues that the commission should consider, but they are surmountable. They do not negate the potential value of the project to the city and the importance of long-term waste disposal capacity.

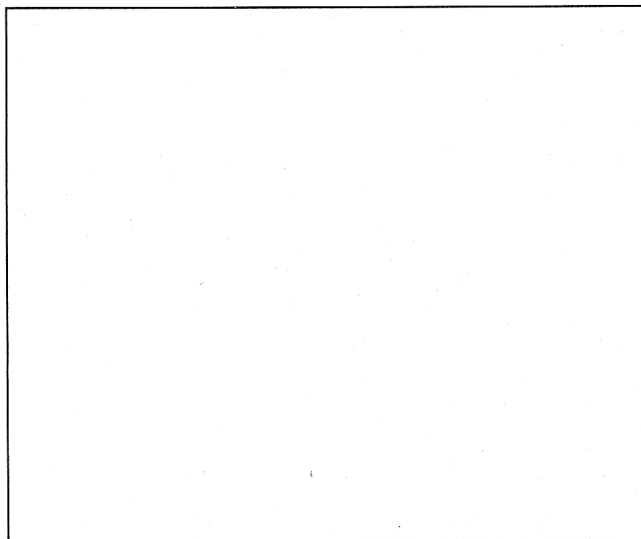
The waste transfer station would help meet a legitimate need as more and more suburban landfills shut down - including the Puente Hills Landfill that serves the Pomona area and is scheduled to close in 2013. At a transfer

station, waste delivered by regular garbage collection trucks is transferred to much larger trucks for transport across large distances to landfills farther away. The site under consideration has rail-spur access, in case waste in the future can be transported to desert landfills by train cars.

The station itself would be a 23,000-square-foot building on a 10.5-acre site in an industrial area south of Mission Boulevard and east of Reservoir Street. It would be a fully enclosed facility designed for Gold LEED certification, indicating environmentally friendly construction. Valley Vista points to the jobs and economic benefit of a \$14 million construction project - 45 to 50 permanent jobs with benefits, and an estimated \$1 million annually in revenue for city government.

Some opponents complain about the facility itself, but more worry about traffic and emissions from all the trucks that would use it. They object to the fact that the facility is larger than required for Pomona's trash, meaning that waste from nearby cities is likely to be processed there in the future.

But the project is sensibly designed to handle trash capacity 20 years out, and to accept trash from a 6-mile radius around the plant. That



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radius takes in nearby cities such as Claremont and Montclair, certainly - but we see that as a boon, not a problem. A regional approach to waste disposal makes sense.

The air pollution mitigations have increased with each release of a revised environmental impact report. Now, to reduce particulate matter emissions from diesel engines, 100 percent of the operator's trucks - for collection and transfer - must be powered by clean compressed natural gas at the facility's opening. All collector trucks using the facility would have to be CNG by 2020, consistent with EPA and California Air Resources Board goals. Opponents have effectively pressed their point on air pollution and have won a reasonable victory.

Traffic is a legitimate issue for the commission to consider, especially on Reservoir at the 60 Freeway, where the transfer trucks would get on and off the freeway. The ramps will be improved, but the exact timing of the improvement by Caltrans is unclear.

Concerning enforcement of mitigation measures, Valley Vista has agreed to have a monitor onsite. Perhaps it would be more reassuring to have city employees monitor the site on a regular basis, which could be paid for out of the project's fees paid to Pomona.

Mitigations to safeguard city residents reasonably are in order for such a project. Outright rejection of a legitimate and regionally important enterprise is not.



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